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Refund money could be donated to new cancer research fund

Lansing – The Senate today passed legislation to establish “Amanda's Fund for Breast Cancer Research” and to allow individuals to donate to the fund when they pay their taxes.

Residents would be able to designate on their annual tax return that a contribution of \$2 or more of their refund be credited to the research fund.

“This is such an important issue and I’m glad my Senate colleagues agreed,” said bill sponsor Sen. Patty Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Twp. “Any money that can be raised is a big step on the road to researching and finding a cure for breast cancer.”

Birkholz sponsored the bill after a personal friend was diagnosed with breast cancer.

Starting in the year 2005, money donated to the fund will be used to promote research in Michigan relating to breast cancer. The state Department of Community Health will be in charge of the fund and will have the following responsibilities:

- Support the development of a statewide breast cancer research plan;
- Provide information to the public about the value of breast cancer research and early detection;
- Develop and publicize criteria for proposals to be funded under this act; and
- Review and approve proposals to be funded under this act.

Modeled after a similar program in Illinois, Birkholz expects the program to raise approximately \$1 million each year from refund donations. An individual whose refund is not sufficient to make a contribution under this section may instead designate a contribution amount which will be added to their tax liability for the tax year.

Senate bills 581 and 582 now go to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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